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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO G. Chief [REDACTED] Administration & Logistics

DATE: 21 November 1952

FROM [REDACTED] Division Logistics

SUBJECT: Sodium Pentothal

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1. Below is information requested concerning the possible methods of neutralizing the effects of Sodium Pentothal.

2. The class of drugs known as the "Central Nervous System Stimulates" will, to a limited extent, counter-act the effects of Sodium Pentothal. Some of these are: Benzedrine, Dexadrine, Picrotoxin, Caffeine Sodium Benzoate, and Strychnine. These drugs have, however, certain limitations which more or less preclude their successful application in clandestine type activities. Such limitations are as follows:

a. They must be administered just before or just after receiving Sodium Pentothal. This would be difficult to accomplish as it is doubtful that the agent would have the necessary beforehand knowledge of his treatment nor would he be allowed to administer himself during treatment.

b. Such drugs would have to be secreted on the person and administered (such as pills) externally. It is believed that a thorough search of the agent would disclose any such secreted drugs.

c. A physician administering Sodium Pentothal would continue to inject Sodium Pentothal until the patient evidenced the desired reaction; therefore, it would not be possible for the agent to consume enough Central Nervous System Stimulates to neutralize an excessive amount of Sodium Pentothal and still remain alive.

3. Modern psychiatry regularly employs in therapy such tools as narcoticsynthesis which involves the use of truth serums such as Sodium Pentothal and Sodium Amytol. Use of these drugs in psychiatric treatment is limited as they merely enable the physician and patient to explore more easily material in the forgotten unconscious of the patient; such treatment is usually long term therapy. Further, many psychiatrists and criminologists have reported value received from the use of truth serums as often negative. The reason for this is that if the subject has exceptionally strong inhibitions concerning certain material, truth serums are not powerful enough to cause him to divulge the inhibited material. In view of the foregoing, it is believed that if agents were well versed in their cover and the security of such cover, that it would be exceedingly difficult to extract sensitive information from them while under the influence of truth serums.

[REDACTED]

4. It is recommended that the foregoing information not be accepted as fact, but that a requirement be presented OTS for a research project to investigate the problem of neutralizing the effects of truth serums. [REDACTED] of ADCS/MO has indicated his willingness to aid [REDACTED] in the preparation of such a requirement. G

5. Your comments are requested concerning paragraph 4 above.

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